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# ECONOMIC FACTORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON TERRORISM AND WAYS TO ADDRESS THEM

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## **ECONOMIC FACTORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON TERRORISM AND WAYS TO ADDRESS THEM**

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This study examines the relationships between economic factors and terrorism, focusing on poverty, unemployment, corruption, and globalization as economic factors that contribute to encouraging extremism and terrorism.

The research aims to achieve three main objectives. First, to conduct an analysis of the relationships between poverty, unemployment, and terrorism, shedding light on the mechanisms through which economic deprivation may contribute to fostering extremism and supporting terrorist activities. Second, to investigate the role of corruption in the economy as a motivator for terrorism and work on identifying effective policies to reduce corrupt practices and dismantle financial networks that support terrorist organizations. Finally, to study the impact of foreign funding and globalization as economic factors influencing the emergence of terrorism, with a focus on formulating actionable recommendations to leverage globalization as a tool for economic development and implementing measures to mitigate its negative impact on the phenomenon of terrorism.

To achieve these goals, the research employed a descriptive methodology to highlight a variety of economic contexts for understanding the interactions between them and terrorism.

The results showed that poverty, unemployment, and corruption, despite their negative impact on economies and societies, are isolated from other factors (social, cultural, and political) and do not lead to the adoption of criminal and terrorist behavior. However, when combined with other factors, they are effective in fueling extremism.

In the end, the research provided recommendations focused on enhancing economic development programs, education, and training in various skills. The research recommendations included the need to develop economic and social policies targeting employment opportunities and reducing poverty rates. It also recommended building international partnerships to exchange information and coordinate efforts to combat the flow of funds to terrorist organizations.

**Keywords:** Economic Factors, Poverty, Unemployment, Corruption, Foreign Funding, Globalization, Terrorism.



## Introduction:

This research aims to examine the economic factors believed to play a significant role in the emergence and development of violence and terrorism, as well as to explore effective ways to address these challenges.

Over time, studies have revealed<sup>(1)</sup> a strong correlation between certain economic aspects and the phenomenon of terrorism; economic transformations interact with social and cultural conditions, influencing the formation and spread of this phenomenon.

Economic factors constitute an important element in the broader discourse on terrorism ,but they do not operate in isolation .They coexist with a complex matrix of social, political ,and cultural factors ,each interacting with terrorism in different ways .Poverty alone does not breed terrorism ,just as prosperity does not guarantee its absence. In the context of these multifaceted interactions ,the researcher seeks to distinguish the specific roles played by economic factors in promoting terrorist activities and recruiting potential individuals.

## Research Problem:

In this research ,it is assumed that poverty ,unemployment ,corruption ,foreign funding ,and globalization ,in their various dimensions ,are economic factors with an impact on criminal behavior and terrorism.

Based on this assumption ,the research aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do factors such as poverty and unemployment synergistically contribute to extremism? What are the precise social and economic pathways that guide individuals toward participation in terrorist activities?
2. In what ways does corruption within economic systems facilitate the financing and perpetuation of terrorism? What strong strategies can be formulated to effectively mitigate corrupt practices and disable financial channels supporting terrorist organizations?
3. How does foreign funding and globalization impact terrorism financing and sustenance? What practical measures can be suggested to harness globalization for economic stability while minimizing its negative impact on the spread of terrorism?

## Research Objectives:

This research aims to identify the economic factors influ-

encing terrorism and ways to address them, through the following main objectives:

1. Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the relationships between poverty, unemployment, and terrorism, elucidating specific mechanisms through which economic deprivation contributes to the promotion of extremism and the sustainability of extremist activities.
2. Investigate the role of corruption in the economy as a motivator for terrorism, and identify effective methods and policies to limit corrupt practices and dismantle financial networks supporting terrorist organizations.
3. Study the impact of foreign funding and globalization on the economic factors influencing terrorism, and formulate implementable recommendations to leverage globalization as a tool for economic development while implementing measures to mitigate its negative repercussions on terrorism.

## Research Methodology:

The research adopts a descriptive methodology to describe and analyze the economic factors influencing the phenomenon of terrorism and to present effective ways to address it. This methodology aims to achieve a deep understanding of the interactions and relationships between economic variables, providing a precise description of the studied phenomenon. Subsequently, it offers a qualitative analysis of its effects on the phenomenon itself.

## First: The Concept of Economic Factors and Their Relationship to Extremism

The term economic factors refers to the various conditions and elements within the economy of any country that can impact economic outcomes, such as the production and distribution of goods and services, employment levels, income, economic well-being, and comprehensive development .<sup>(2)</sup>These economic factors can be either holistic ,affecting the entire national economy ,or partial, influencing specific industries or economic units ,sometimes in combination.

It is worth noting that economic factors can contribute to the growth and development of conditions conducive to terrorism .However ,they typically intersect with other po-



litical ,social ,and cultural factors ,requiring effective efforts to combat terrorism often involving a multi-faceted approach that addresses these complex interrelations<sup>(3)</sup> . Additionally ,not all individuals facing economic challenges are prone to terrorist recruitment ,as individual motivations and circumstances vary.

**Most Affected Countries by Terrorism**

Table (1) highlights the top ten countries most affected by terrorism in the Global Terrorism Index <sup>(4)</sup>for the year <sup>(5)</sup> ,2023comparing their rankings to those in .2011 The ten most affected countries are the same as those topping the list in ,2021 although the order has changed for six countries .Afghanistan maintains its position as the most terrorism-affected country for the fourth consecutive year ,followed by Burkina Faso ,which rose from fourth to

second place .Somalia retained the third position for the sixth consecutive year.

Mali moved up three positions ,and Pakistan dropped four positions ,securing the fourth and sixth positions on the index ,respectively .Iraq ,on the other hand ,fell four places to the seventh position .Somalia consistently ranks among the top five most affected countries for the seventh consecutive year.

It is noteworthy that the countries experiencing the most significant deterioration in rankings since 2011 are all located in the Sahel region of Africa :Burkina Faso ,Mali, and Niger .On the other hand ,Iraq recorded the most significant improvement in the index ,and Afghanistan also witnessed a notable improvement of approximately,4% the most significant positive change since.2011

#	Country	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Afghanistan	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
2	Burkina Faso	113	113	111	108	52	30	21	15	7	6	4	2
3	Somalia	5	7	7	7	8	5	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	Mali	41	23	19	21	16	13	10	9	8	7	7	4
5	Syria	20	4	4	5	6	7	7	8	6	5	6	5
6	Pakistan	2	2	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	8	10	6
7	Iraq	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	7
8	Nigeria	8	5	5	3	2	2	4	4	4	4	6	8
9	Myanmar	17	21	24	29	39	42	40	42	23	24	9	9
10	Niger	49	57	44	34	20	19	18	19	14	12	8	10

**Table 1: List of the Ten Most Terrorism-Affected Countries in the Last Ten Years**

Source: Dragonfly Terrorism Tracker Website (2023)

When one scrutinizes the results of this table, they find that most of these countries (Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Mali, Myanmar, and Niger) exhibit manifestations of poverty, high unemployment and corruption rates, low income, poor wealth distribution, and other economic factors that may constitute a link in the spread of extremism and terrorism.

At the same time, the researcher noted that not all of these countries are classified as the poorest in the world; there are countries with relatively good economic conditions, such as Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, and Pakistan, but they have been significantly affected by violence and terrorism. This confirms that economic factors alone are not the cause

of violence, extremism, and terrorism; but when they intersect with other factors, such as social, cultural, and extremist ideologies, they collectively lead to catastrophic outcomes.



**Secondly: Economic Factors Impacting Terrorism**

This section aims to delve deeper into the economic factors influencing terrorism, including poverty, unemployment, corruption, foreign funding, and the role of globalization in





poverished areas may view joining terrorist organizations as a practical economic option due to financial incentives such as salaries or access to illegal economic resources provided by these groups.

- d. Economic Inequality and Perceived Injustice:** Economic inequality fuels perceptions of injustice, fostering a sense of grievance among the poor who may seek to address this perceived injustice through means like violence and terrorism.

On the other hand, some researchers argue that while poverty may not be the sole cause of terrorism, there is an undeniable and close relationship between economic deprivation and individuals' susceptibility to extremist ideologies and engagement in terrorist activities. Therefore, this relationship must be substantiated through empirical studies.<sup>(11)</sup>

In this context, some experimental study results suggest that poverty is linked to terrorism to varying and marginal extents depending on the study's society and sample. Poverty is identified as just one factor in a complex network of other factors leading to terrorism, such as various social, political, and economic factors. For example, a study by Zaidi Munthar (2010)<sup>(12)</sup> found a potential connection between extremism and poverty in Pakistan through a survey of 1,147 individuals, who were a sample of the poor compared to wealthier control groups across all provinces of Pakistan.

The study focused on an analytical discourse of poverty in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. However, the study did not provide a specific percentage of the relationship between poverty and terrorist activities, making it inappropriate to generalize its results even to the same country, let alone the rest of the world. Moreover, many individual-level analytical studies have failed to find any direct relationship between poverty and the inclination to participate in terrorism.<sup>(13)</sup>

There is another perplexing issue regarding the poverty hypothesis at the individual level. Many individual-level analytical studies have been unable to find any direct relationship between poverty and the inclination to participate in terrorism, such as studies by Atran Scott,<sup>(14)</sup> Krueger and Malečková,<sup>(15)</sup> Claude Berrebi,<sup>(16)</sup> and others.

We can conclude that the relationship between poverty and terrorism is complex and multifaceted. Poverty may create conditions that make individuals more susceptible to extremist recruitment. Addressing the issue of terrorism requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account social, political, and economic factors. Reducing

poverty, improving access to education and economic opportunities, and addressing the root causes of terrorism are all essential elements in building an effective strategy to combat terrorism.

### 3. The Concept of Unemployment and Its Relationship to Terrorism

Unemployment is a key economic and social indicator that refers to the condition in which individuals actively seeking employment, yet unable to find suitable jobs. Unemployment serves as a crucial gauge of economic health and performance, with potential far-reaching social and economic consequences that negatively impact the society in which it prevails.<sup>(17)</sup>

Unemployment is typically measured using various labor market indicators, focusing primarily on qualified individuals actively seeking employment within a specified period. Several main measures and methods are commonly used to assess levels of unemployment, including the unemployment rate, labor force participation rate, employment-to-population ratio, underemployment, and youth unemployment rates.

The relationship between unemployment and terrorist activities is complex and multifaceted. While unemployment itself does not directly cause terrorism, it can contribute to conditions where extremist ideologies gain more traction, making individuals more susceptible to recruitment by terrorist organizations.

Numerous studies have indicated a positive relationship between high levels of youth unemployment and an increased risk of terrorist recruitment.<sup>(18)</sup> Regions with elevated youth unemployment rates often experience higher levels of extremism and terrorist activities.

In this context, a study by Adesoji Adelaja and Justin George<sup>(19)</sup> sought to explain how variations in youth unemployment rates among countries can account for differences in terrorism measures, particularly local terrorism. The study utilized data from 126 countries between 1996 and 2015 considering variables such as the number of terrorist attacks and casualties.

The study found a positive relationship between youth unemployment and local terrorism, conditioned by various developmental factors such as corruption, government ineffectiveness, and the absence of the rule of law. It emphasized that youth unemployment can contribute to fueling local terrorism and internal conflicts but is not a significant indicator for transnational terrorism at all.<sup>(20)</sup>

In conclusion, the relationship between poverty and ter-







ruption undermines accountability, allowing those involved to escape punishment, eroding trust in the system or the law. Failure to hold corrupt individuals accountable increases frustration and a tendency towards extremism to achieve justice.

- e. **Financing and Financial Support for Extremism:** Corruption directs funds towards illicit activities, including terrorism. In a climate of corruption, terrorist groups may find fertile ground to establish channels that help them grow and ensure their continuity.
- f. In conclusion, we can assert that corruption contributes to creating conditions for the emergence of terrorist activities, makes individuals more susceptible to extremist ideologies, and weakens efforts to combat extremism and terrorism. Addressing corruption is therefore a fundamental aspect of counterterrorism strategies.

## 5. Foreign financing and its role in promoting terrorism

The term “foreign financing” refers to obtaining funds or capital from external sources located in different areas than the local entity borrowing. This financial strategy allows institutions, governments, or individuals to access capital markets beyond their local borders to meet specific financial needs or pursue strategic initiatives.<sup>(25)</sup> This approach is based on the recognition that accessing international capital markets can provide diversification benefits and mitigate risks in the local market. The decision to choose foreign financing is often influenced by factors such as interest rate differentials, currency considerations, and the general economic and political environment of both the borrowing and lending countries.

Foreign financing plays a crucial role in the global financial landscape, facilitating the flow of capital across borders and promoting economic development. It serves as a channel to transfer funds from surplus areas to deficit areas, supporting international trade, infrastructure development, and other cross-border initiatives. Foreign financing can take various forms, such as loans, equity, foreign direct investment, foreign aid and grants, and foreign trade financing. It is subject to regulatory frameworks and prevailing conditions in the legal jurisdictions of both the borrower and the lender.

### 5.1. Types of Foreign Financing

The concept of foreign financing, an integral part of global financial strategies, encompasses five main types: external loans, foreign stocks, foreign direct investment,

foreign aid and grants, and foreign trade financing.<sup>(26)</sup>

Foreign financing is a multifaceted financial strategy that allows entities to benefit from global capital markets, diversify funding sources, and manage financial risks associated with cross-border operations. Understanding the nuances of foreign financing is crucial for financial decision-makers dealing with the complexities of international finance.

### 5.2. The Relationship between Foreign Financing and Terrorism

Certain types of foreign financing have been identified as more susceptible to exploitation by terrorist organizations. Pierre Emmanuel<sup>(27)</sup> highlighted that one prominent way to finance terrorism is through the exploitation of charitable and humanitarian organizations. These institutions, often operating across borders for the benefit of communities, may unintentionally become channels for funds directed towards terrorist activities. Some terrorist organizations have been known to exploit the ambiguous nature of certain charitable donations, using them as cover to transfer funds across borders and finance their operations<sup>(28)</sup>.

Informal financial systems, such as transfer networks, sometimes pose a significant concern in the context of terrorism financing. John Wilson<sup>(29)</sup> emphasized that these systems, operating outside traditional banking structures, can facilitate the rapid movement of funds across borders with minimal supervision. Terrorist organizations exploit this feature to engage in secret financial transactions and seek out fragile systems to operate beneath.

Loans and foreign bonds, especially those issued in jurisdictions with lax regulatory frameworks, represent risks of embezzlement for financing terrorism.<sup>(30)</sup> The lack of strict financial controls and supervision in some judicial jurisdictions makes it easy for illicit actors to collect and transfer funds without detection.

The relationship between foreign financing and terrorism underscores the importance of implementing effective measures to mitigate the unintended facilitation of terrorism financing through financial systems. Charitable organizations, informal financial networks, and specific types of loans and foreign bonds require enhanced scrutiny to protect against the unintentional facilitation of terrorism financing.

## 6. Globalization and its Relationship with Extremism and Terrorism



terrorism is complex and multifaceted, encompassing economic, political, and cultural dimensions. Although globalization has undoubtedly exacerbated some conditions conducive to terrorism, it has also provided opportunities for cooperative efforts to address these challenges and mitigate their severity.

### Thirdly: Ways to Address Economic Issues Impacting Terrorism

In the quest to find ways to address economic factors influencing terrorism, a multifaceted approach that combines economic, social, and political strategies must be adopted. Terrorism often finds fertile ground in regions characterized by poverty, unemployment, corruption, and inadequate governance. This comprehensive approach should seek to alleviate these economic challenges and build resilient societies that are less susceptible to extremist ideologies.<sup>(49)</sup> The key measures to address these issues include:

- **Enhancing Economic Development Programs:** To mitigate the impact of poverty on terrorism, governments and international organizations must implement sustainable economic development programs. These programs, focusing on education, healthcare, and infrastructure, have proven to uplift communities and reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies.<sup>(50)</sup>
- **Encouraging Microfinance Initiatives:** Encouraging microfinance initiatives can empower individuals in impoverished areas, providing them with the means to establish small projects and improve their economic conditions. Research indicates that such initiatives significantly contribute to poverty reduction.<sup>(51)</sup>
- **Skills Training and Education:** Investing in skills training and vocational education programs can equip individuals with the necessary skills for the job market, reducing unemployment rates and, consequently, lowering susceptibility to extremist ideologies.<sup>(52)</sup>
- **Promoting Transparency and Accountability:** Governments should prioritize anti-corruption measures, including establishing transparent systems and accountability mechanisms to curb corrupt practices.<sup>(53)</sup>
- **Regulating and Strengthening Financial Systems:** Governments should regulate and strengthen financial systems to monitor and prevent illicit financial flows, imposing strict controls on money laundering and terrorist

financing.<sup>(54)</sup>

- **International Cooperation:** Studies emphasize that collaboration between countries to exchange intelligence and coordinate efforts in tracking and halting the flow of funds to terrorist organizations is essential for global security. This includes implementing international agreements and conventions to strengthen a unified front against corrupt and suspicious practices.<sup>(55)</sup>
- **Enhancing Cultural Exchange Programs and Monitoring:** Strengthening and monitoring cultural exchange programs can promote mutual understanding and tolerance, countering the negative aspects of globalization that may contribute to the emergence of extremist ideologies.<sup>(56)</sup>
- **Regulating Information Flow:** Governments should implement measures to regulate the online space, monitor and control the spread of propaganda and extremist ideologies on the internet and social media.<sup>(57)</sup>

In conclusion, addressing economic issues impacting terrorism requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort that combines various strategies across economic, social, and political dimensions. While globalization has posed challenges, it has also provided opportunities for collaborative efforts to tackle these challenges and mitigate their impact.

### Fourthly: Conclusion, Findings, and Recommendations

This paper shed light on the relationship between economic factors influencing terrorism and ways to address them. The research began with the fundamentals of economic theories, such as rational choice theory, routine activity theory, and social learning theory. The findings revealed important insights into the varied relationships between these factors and the phenomenon of terrorism. It became evident that societies vulnerable to poverty are more susceptible to extremist ideologies. Unemployment also enhances individuals' readiness to attack the system and rebel against it.

The study highlighted that corruption is a significant factor in promoting terrorism, as it contributes to creating an environment that distorts governments and facilitates the emergence of terrorist activities. Additionally, the research emphasized the role of foreign funding in promoting terrorism by contributing to the financing of terrorist activities and expanding their impact.

In the context of globalization, it appears that despite the benefits it has brought in terms of economic and cultural interconnectedness, globalization also presents tangible challenges. It contributes to shaping a context that supports the growth of extremist ideologies.

To address these economic issues impacting terrorism, it is recommended to adopt a multifaceted approach that combines economic and social policies. Sustainable economic development programs should be enhanced to create an environment that mitigates poverty and promotes stability. The importance of supporting entrepreneurship and encouraging microfinance initiatives to economically empower individuals is emphasized. Additionally, focusing on skills training and vocational education enhances individuals' skills and reduces unemployment rates, thus decreasing susceptibility to extremist ideologies.

The importance of promoting transparency and combating corruption is underscored to enhance stability and transition to an environment conducive to development. Regulating and strengthening financial systems to monitor and curb illicit financial flows is crucial. In the context of international cooperation, there is an emphasis on the necessity of exchanging information and coordinating efforts to combat cross-border terrorism financing.

Finally, enhancing cultural exchange programs and monitoring them can contribute to mutual understanding and mitigate the negative effects of globalization. In conclusion, addressing economic issues influencing terrorism requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort that

encompasses various strategies across economic, social, and political dimensions.

## Recommendations:

- Enhancing efforts aimed at improving economic conditions in societies vulnerable to the threat of terrorism. Encouraging investment in sustainable development programs targeting poverty and unemployment, thereby contributing to the enhancement of social stability.
- Promoting education and vocational training as a means to empower individuals and strengthen them against extremist ideologies, in order to improve employment opportunities and reduce involvement in terrorist activities.
- Intensifying international cooperation in combating terrorism financing and intelligence information exchange, and establishing effective mechanisms for international collaboration that contribute to reducing the ability of terrorist groups to finance their activities.
- Supporting transparency and combating corruption; as transparent economic systems have been proven to reduce the likelihood of exploiting funds to finance terrorism.
- Combating terrorism as part of a collective international effort based on coordination and collaboration in various economic, social, and security fields.





## ► End Notes

1. العوامل الاقتصادية والاجتماعية وأثرها على معدلات التطرف والارهاب «دراسة ميدانية»، المجلة العلمية بكلية الآداب بجامعة طنطا، المجلد -2020 العدد 38، 219.
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